

Open Grounds by Finn Home Inspectors

Open grounds on an electrical receptacle is a safety hazard.

On an electrical receptacle the round hole in the receptacle is supposed to be connected to ground. The term open ground means the receptacle ground is not connected to the ground. Ground is exactly what it sounds like, the soil around your house, it's the electrical potential ground.

The receptacle ground is intended to take all the electrical energy if something goes wrong in the appliance you have plugged in, so as not to electrocute you.

When the inspector identifies an open ground, an electrician is needed to check all receptacles in the house and determine why there is no ground. The ground wire may not be connected to the receptacle, it may be that the wire is an old type that does not have a ground (like Knob & Tube). If the wire needs replacement the cost of correcting the open ground would be costly.

Diagram from Carson/Dunlop.

Color coding for typical 120 volt circuit

